

MARK'S STORY OF JESUS

READING THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO SAINT MARK

Emmanuel
Lutheran
Church
of Rochester, MN.

Confirmation
Ministry

“Bible Reading”
1-5th Grade Unit
November 2013



“And many spread their garments on the road, and others spread leafy branches which they had cut from the fields. And those who went before and those who followed cried out, “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the kingdom of our father David that is coming! Hosanna in the highest!”

Mark 11:8-9

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Introduction to Mark's Gospel and this Unit of Study

Dear Confirmands,

Welcome to Mark's story of Jesus! During this Confirmation Unit, you, as a family, will read the first written story about Jesus. The Gospel of Mark was written around the year 70 A.D. after the Roman army had destroyed Jerusalem. It was a hard time for the people of Israel, and for Christians. Mark wrote his story of the cross to give people of faith, hope in Jesus.

Like the people of Mark's Church, we, too, wonder if God is in control. We wonder if God really cares about us. Mark's story is a loud, "YES!" to those questions. Mark's story of Jesus is written for you, so that you will know what Jesus has done for you, and what Jesus intends for you: Forgiveness of sins and life everlasting!

Mark's story of Jesus seeks to answer the question, "What does Baptism mean for daily living?" In the Sacrament of Baptism, the cross was placed upon our heads. The cross seals us with God's love, forever. But the cross is also the story of our lifelong walk with Jesus. We are disciples of Jesus. As we grow in years, we learn to live the GOOD NEWS, by walking in the steps of Jesus.

Mark's good news story of Jesus begins with our Lord's baptism in the Jordan River. The story marches toward the cross where Jesus is put to death. And the story ends, or shall we say begins, again, with the empty tomb of Easter. We, who suffer with Jesus, will also live with Jesus forever. What does the confession, "Jesus is Lord," mean for HOW WE LIVE? Read Mark's story of Jesus and find out.

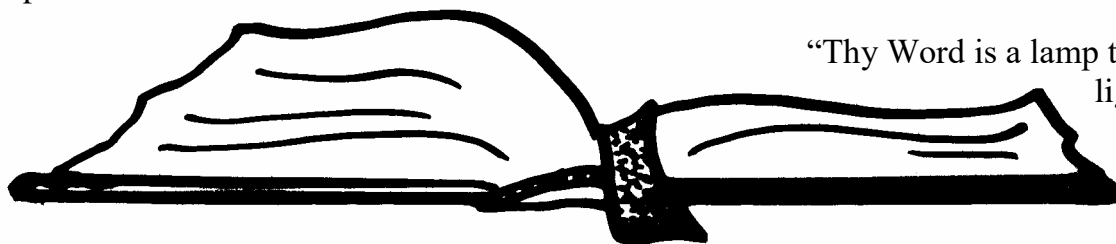
During the month of October we will meet on Wednesday nights at Oasis church for classroom activities. At home, during the month of November, you will read the Gospel of Mark together as a family. I suggest that you read one devotional daily during the week & vacation in CHURCH on Saturday nights. When you gather as a family (student & parents), have someone read aloud the assigned passage. Then be quiet for a few moments and think about what you have just read. Use the comments & questions provided for each day's reading as the start of your own discussion. There is no right or wrong answers. Keep notes on your thoughts and questions in the spaces provided (see also back page). End each time with the prayer provided. Feel free to color the pictures.

I will schedule an in-home visit with your family for the month of December. During that home visit, I will help you with any questions you may have about Mark's story of Jesus, and discuss the importance of God's WORD in our lives. I will also collect your Keepsake Memo: memory verse on John 3:16. I hope that you enjoy your new Bible & this Devotional Book. May God Bless you in this Family Walk of Confirmation Ministry!

In Christ,

Pastor Dave Steffenson

"Thy Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path!"
Psalm 119:105



DAY 1

“The Beginning of the Story?”

READ Mark 16:1-8

The women were afraid. Sometimes we are afraid, too. How do you feel when you visit a cemetery? It is a place of death. We don't expect someone who died to come back to life. When you are dead, you are dead. Right? Jesus told his disciples that he would rise from the dead. Why are the women afraid to believe the good news?

Have you ever read the end of a story first? Is the beginning of a story always found on page one? Mark wrote his story after Jesus had died and was raised from the dead. We know the end of this story. We can walk through the dark because we have a light to help us see.

Let us pray: Dear Jesus, we live in your family right now. Someday we will die. Then you will raise us to new life. Help us not to be afraid of dying. We know the end of our story. Help us to live with joy. Because you live, we live, too. Thank you, God. Amen

DAY 2

“Baptism:

The Beginning of the Gospel”

READ Mark 1:1-13

The good news of God always begins with Jesus. “Gospel” means, “good news.” The story that Mark tells us has a good surprise ending. God uses people like John the Baptist to prepare the world for Jesus. John

baptizes Jesus in the Jordan River. Baptism is the beginning of Jesus' ministry. Baptism is the end of our separation from God. Jesus fought with Satan for forty days in the desert. Jesus won the fight. Satan tempts us, too. But God promises that we will win the fight. Why do we need to tell God that we are sorry for our sins? Does God forgive us even when we are not sorry for the bad things we say and do? Remember God's promise to you: “You are my much loved child. I am pleased with you.”

Let us pray: Dear Father in heaven, thank you for adopting us into your family. We are sorry for the ways we hurt other people. Please forgive us. Help us to believe the good news and joyfully share it with others. Amen

DAY 3

“Called to the Ministry of Healing”

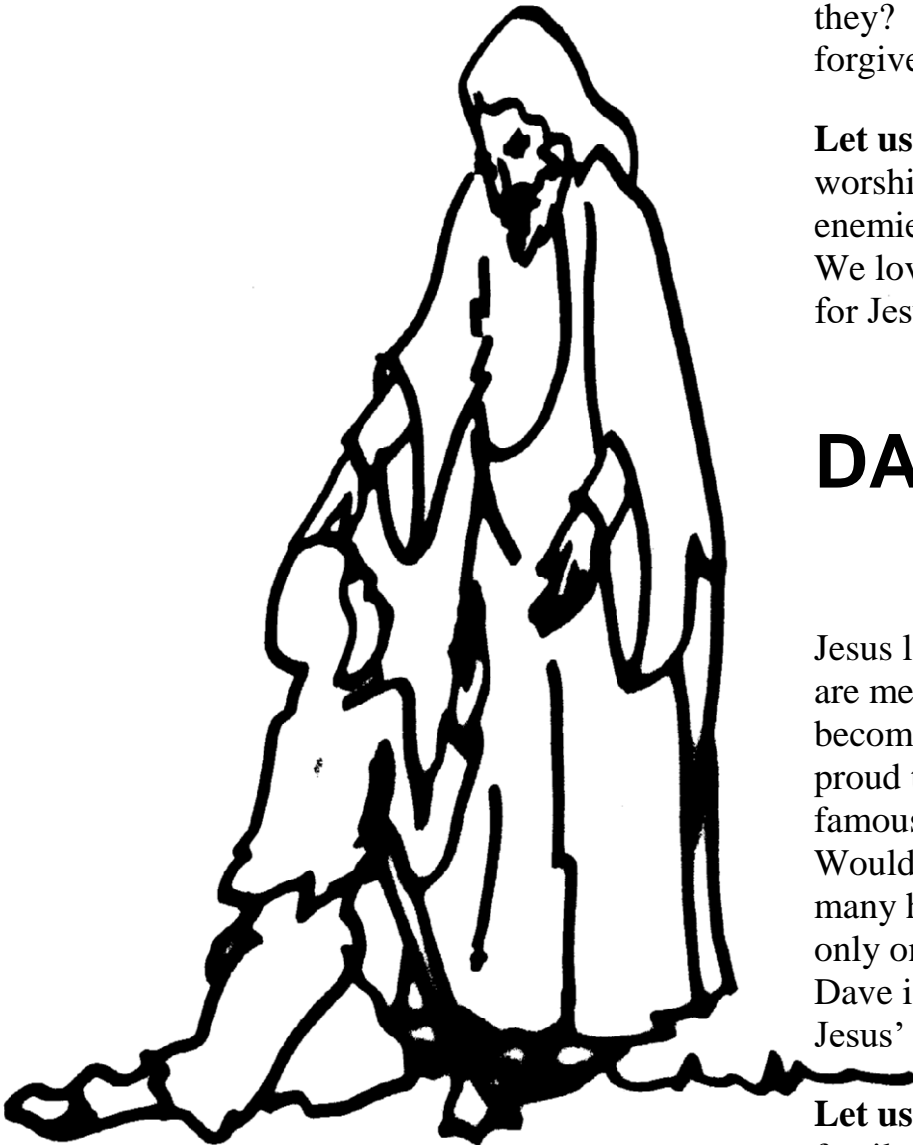
READ Mark 1:14-45

The leper looked at Jesus and said, “If you want to, you can heal me.” Jesus said, “I want to.” Jesus wants everyone to be well. We read the Bible and pray, and God heals us in God's own way. What did Simon's mother-in-law do after Jesus healed her? How can we serve Jesus?



Why did Jesus go out to a quiet place by himself? Jesus told the disciples to follow him. They stopped fishing with nets and began fishing for people. The demons know who Jesus is. Why does Jesus keep the demons from telling people who he is?

Let us pray: Dear Jesus, thanks for calling me to be one of your followers. Sometimes we want to be the leaders, but it's all right to follow you. You are a good leader. You heal us when we are sick. Amen



DAY 4

“Community of Faith”
READ Mark 2:1-12

A man was paralyzed. He could not walk. He had good friends. His friends carried him around on a bed. One day they took the roof off a house and lowered their friend into Jesus' living room. When Jesus saw the faith of the community, he healed the man. Jesus gave the man two gifts. What were they? Would you rather walk or receive forgiveness? Who can forgive you?

Let us pray: Dear Jesus, thank you for worship and rest. Help us to love our enemies and forgive people who hurt us. We love you for forgiving us. Give us faith, for Jesus' sake. Amen

DAY 5

“All in the Family”
READ Mark 3:19-35

Jesus loves the people in the crowds. They are members of his family. How do we become a brother or sister of Jesus? Are we proud to be a child of God? Jesus was so famous that he did not even have time to eat. Would you like to be that popular? We have many households in our church, but we have only one family. Did you know that Pastor Dave is your brother? Do we ever use Jesus' name in a bad way?

Let us pray: Dear Holy Spirit, make us one family. Help us to use your name with respect, God. We do your will when we love you as you love us. May your will be done in our lives. Baptism is the beginning of the good news for us. Baptism makes us one family. Amen

DAY 6

“The Kingdom of God is Here”

READ Mark 4:1-13

Jesus was a teacher. We are teachers, too. Parents teach their children and children teach their parents. Jesus told simple stories with deep hidden meanings. What kind of soil are we? Are we rocky ground one day and thorny ground the next? Are we sowers of God’s Word? We are Insiders. God has promised to produce a big harvest in our lives. Baptism makes you part of God’s Kingdom right now. Do you understand everything in the Bible? Why don’t you understand?

Let us pray: Rabbi Jesus, teach us your Word and help us to understand your Kingdom. Thanks for planting your love and acceptance in us. Continue to water us and cultivate us so that we might bear a bumper crop for you. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory. Now and forever. Amen

DAY 7

“Be Still”

READ Mark 4:35-41

Christians face a lot of storms in life. We have problems and worries. Sometimes we even think God has forgotten about us. We say, “Are you sleeping, Jesus? Wake up! We are drowning!” The disciples were worried, but Jesus was sleeping calmly. Does fear mean that our faith is weak? What kind of miracles have we seen? Does Jesus’ power and authority scare you?

Let us pray: Thank you Lord for the miracle of breath. Sometimes the wind feels nice—especially when it is warm. Sometimes the wind can destroy things. Help us not to worry, for we have you in our boats, too. Hold our hands and calm our storms when we are afraid. Help us to sleep and rise in your peace. Amen

DAY 8

“Miracles: Blessing or Burden?”

READ Mark 5:1-20

A man lived in the country of the Gerasenes. He had an unclean spirit. The devil controlled his life. Jesus healed this man. That’s good news, right? But the local farmers weren’t very happy. Why? How would you feel if Jesus just made you lose 2000 of your pigs? Why did Jesus send the demons into the pigs? What is more important: setting a man free, or saving pigs? What did the man do after Jesus saved him? What do we do, now that Jesus has set us free from sin and death?

Let us pray: Dear Jesus, we don’t want the devil controlling our lives. We want you to set us free from bad desires. We know that we are more important than 2000 pigs. Save us from our possessions. Help us to tell others what you have done for us. Amen

DAY 9

“Sent to Seek”
READ Mark 6:1-13

Jesus was an ordinary man from the town of Nazareth. He was the son of Joseph and Mary. So, how could he be the son of God? Faith is sometimes confusing. What do you do when you can't understand something? Do you pretend that you know everything? Or do you ask questions? Jesus chose apostles. We are apostles. We are sent out to share God's love with others. The only thing we need to take along with us is Jesus. Why does Jesus send the disciples out two-by-two? Do you like to play hide-and-go-seek? What is more fun: hiding from God or seeking others?

Let us pray: Dear Jesus, thank you for sending us out into the world with your good news of love. Thank you for seeking us when we are lost. Help us to witness boldly and eagerly. Give us rest and send us to serve again. Amen

DAY 10

“Let Us Break Bread Together”
READ Mark 6:30-44

It seems like we are always hungry. We eat three meals every day. And in between times, we open the refrigerator and grab a snack. Jesus said, “I am the Bread of Life.” Do we feed our faith or just our bellies? Jesus' disciples were so busy that they skipped meals. What did they do when others were hungry? Do we say grace before we eat? In Holy Communion, Jesus feeds us so we can feed others.

Let us pray: Dear Jesus, thank you for the food we eat each day. Help us to share our food with others. We eat while others starve. Forgive us. Thank you for your Meal of Grace. Thank you for your Welcome Table. Help us break bread together. Amen



DAY 11

“Whose Rules Do We Follow?”

READ Mark 7:1-23

The Pharisees were good religious people. They followed rules. But they made up most of their rules. Whose rules do we follow? God’s rules or our rules? God gave rules to protect us. The government makes laws to keep people safe and happy. Mothers and fathers make rules, too. What are some of your family rules? Do you like rules? Do the rules ever change? Where does evil come from? Jesus says that evil comes from within our hearts. What bad thoughts and words come out of our mouths?

Let us pray: Dear God, thank you for welcoming us into your family. Help us to obey and follow your rules. We know that you love us and protect us. Help us to speak loving words. Amen

DAY 12

“Who Am I?”

READ Mark 8:22-9:13

Who is really blind in our reading for today? Sometimes we think we know more than we really do. Peter knew who Jesus was. He had the right title, but he had the wrong definition. Peter did not know what a Savior does. Who do we say that Jesus is? Jesus is our friend. How do we talk about him to our friends in school or in the neighborhood? The Transfiguration story (Mark 9:2-9) reminds us that Jesus really is the Savior of the world. If we follow the Savior, what kind of a life will we have? In baptism, God tells us that we are his much-loved children.

Let us pray: Who am I, Lord? I know that I am a sinner. I know that I do mean and uncaring things. Sometimes I am nice. But I am not always nice. Who am I, Lord? I am your child. Thank you for dying on the cross so others will know that I belong to you. Amen

DAY 13

“I AM the Greatest”

READ Mark 9:30-50 and 10:32-45

Jesus is the greatest. If we want to be great, then we must be everyone’s servant. If we want to be first in God’s Kingdom, then we must be like helpless babies. James and John, two brothers, wanted the seats of honor. If they sit next to Jesus in heaven, then the other disciples will not be able to sit next to Jesus. This made the others mad and jealous. Jesus showed us his love by dying on the cross for us. If we follow Jesus, will we have to suffer? Will we have to serve people? Jesus is our master servant.

Let us pray: Dear Jesus, make us well. You are the greatest in love and mercy. When we love and forgive we are great. Help us to follow your example. Help us to depend on you as a baby depends on his or her mother. Amen

DAY 14

“What Must I Do To Be Saved?”

READ Mark 10:13-31

If we do good things, are we Christians? If we are Christians, do we do good things? A rich man wanted to be saved. He wanted God to love him. He did everything he could to earn God’s love. One thing was keeping him from God. What was it? Do money or things ever become more important to us than God? What do we do on Sunday mornings? Do we go to church, work, or play sports? Will rich people be in heaven? Can a camel go through the eye of a needle?

Let us pray: Dear God, help us to become poor. Money gets in the way. We love you, but we love some things more. Thank you for doing what we cannot do—like saving us from our sin. Give us what we lack. Help us to be last now, so we can be first later. Amen



DAY 15

“The Beginning of the End”

READ Mark 11:1-12:12

The people shouted, “Hosanna!” as Jesus rode into town. “Hosanna!” means, “Lord, save us!” The people wanted Jesus to save them from the mean Romans. Jesus came to save us from our own meanness. We call this meanness, “sin.” The people shouted “Hosanna!” on Sunday, and they shouted “Crucify him!” on Friday. The palm branches are like flags of death. We burn our palms and use the ashes on Ash Wednesday. Ashes remind us that we are human. Some day we will all die. Why did Jesus ride into Jerusalem on a donkey? Why did he curse the fig tree?

Let us pray: Dear Jesus, we do some pretty mean things. Help us to be nice to others. We want to bear good fruit. Your church is a house of prayer. Lord, teach us to pray. Help us to use the church in a good way. Thank you for all your gifts. Amen



DAY 16

“I Might Give My Mite”

READ Mark 12:41-44

How much money do we give to God each week? Is it the amount we give that counts? Or, is it the reason for giving it? Why do we give money to the church? What does God expect from us? The widow gave her whole life to God. What does that mean? Do we give our children an allowance? Do we spend more on ourselves than we give to God? Jesus is the widow in our story. Jesus gives his whole life.

Let us pray: Dear Jesus, you have given us your whole life. We can never say thanks enough. Help us to give everything back to you. Thank you for the promise of resurrection. We give thee but thine own, O Lord. All that we have is thine, alone, a trust, O Lord, from thee. Amen

DAY 17

“Ready or Not, Here I Come!”

READ Mark 13:1-13, 32-37

After the resurrection, Jesus went into Heaven to be with his Father. He promises us that he is going to come back for us some day. We do not know when. We do not know what the day or the year will be. Jesus does not even know himself. Only God knows! Every year we prepare for Christmas with the Season of Advent. Advent means, “coming.” We prepare for the coming of Jesus. All we can do is watch and wait. We know that God always keeps promises. Are we ready for Jesus? Ready or not, Jesus is coming for you!

Let us pray: Dear Jesus, we believe that you are coming again for us. Prepare our hearts to meet you. Open our eyes to watch for your arrival. Use our mouths to proclaim your good news to all people. Come and get us whenever you are ready, even if we are not ready. Amen

DAY 18

“A Testament For You”

READ Mark 14:12-31

The disciples prepared the Upper Room for the Passover. How do we prepare for Holy Communion? The Lord’s Supper is Jesus’ Last Will and Testament. A Testament is a promise. Jesus promises to be present with us whenever we eat bread and drink wine in his name. Do we have a will? Why should we? A will is a believer’s statement of faith. It tells people after we are dead who we believe in. We really do not own anything. Everything we have is a loan from God. When we die, does God get everything back? Do we keep promises? Do we ever deny Jesus? How?

Let us pray: Dear Jesus, thank you for remembering us in your Will. Help us to remember you and your church in our wills. Keep us from betraying you. Help us keep our promises. We eat and drink your free meal of grace with thanks. Amen



DAY 19

“The Old Rugged Cross”
READ Mark 15:21-39

The Roman soldiers made fun of Jesus. Everyone teased Jesus, even when he was helpless on the cross. The sign said, “King of the Jews.” They crucified their king. Do we still crucify Jesus? How? The Temple curtain was ripped in half. The curtain separated people from God. The separation ended when Jesus died on the cross. Why does Jesus cry out, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”

Let us pray: Dear Jesus, death scares us. Help us to see death not as the end, but as your new beginning for us. Stay near us this night and keep us from all harm. Tear down the walls which divide us from you and from others. Nothing can separate us from your love, O God. We remember our loved ones who have died and now live with you.
Amen

DAY 20

**“The End of the Story?
A New Beginning!”**
READ Mark 16:1-20

Mark’s story of Jesus ends with a question. We know who Jesus is. We know that he is alive. Now, what will we do? Easter creates fear and doubt. It also creates faith. Is baptism important? What does verse 16 say? Jesus is now at the right hand of God. Where is that? Do we really know who Jesus is? If we do, then there is only one thing left for us to do: Sell everything we have and follow him. The Gospel of Mark ends with a new beginning. Jesus says, “Go into all the world and preach the good news to everyone.”

Let us pray: Dear Jesus, I am going to go and tell everyone about your love. We were baptized into mission and today we end with a new beginning. Thank you for letting us be your children. Lead on, O King Eternal!
Amen



Questions and Comments

